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"SPECTEMUR AGENDO."

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THE article, Solanum tuberosum, (*Irish potatoe*,) is one of great importance, as an article of diet. Whilst the Old World has furnished the New with wheat, rye, and rice, the New World has furnished the Old with Indian corn and potatoes; and it is the opinion of our first writers, that the increase of the population of the world, is facilitated more from the support furnished, by the corn and potatoe of America, than from any other secondary cause.

The potatoe is an article of diet frequently selected by the convalescent, which circumstanee augments its dietetic importance; especially to the physician. This fact, connected with its universal use, and the very little known of its history; has induced us to give the following extracts a place in our columns. An extract of the leaves of potatoe were supposed, by Dr. Latham, of London, to possess narcotic principles; and this quality would be, *a priori*, expected, from its relation to the *solanæ*. It was used by Dr. L. in "protracted cases, chronic rheumatism, angina pectoris, calculi, in a case of calculus lodged in the ureter, and in cancer of the uterus, many of which were cured, and all benefited." But Dr. Worsham, after many patient experiments, reported it inert, and, in his opinion, overrated by Dr. Latham. [EDITOR.

The following essay on the *potatoe*, by H. C. WORSHAM, is extracted from the *Philadelphia Journal of Medical and Physical Science*: 1823. No. XI.

"THE solanum tuberosum, according to botanical writers, belongs to the class pentandria, order monogynia, and of the natural family luridæ of Linnæus, and solanæ of Jussieu. It is known by the following characters.

"Root bearing tubers. Stem herbaceous, not armed, segments of the leaves unequal, alternate—pedicles pointed—corolla, angular.

"The natural history of this plant, seems not so well settled as its botanical characters. Its discovery and native history are, indeed, involved in doubt and obscurity, and rendered still more intricate to trace, from the little attention they have received. That the history of this important vegetable, which now forms alike the rich man's luxury, and the poor man's bread, should not, in common with other subjects of less interest, have received the attention of the naturalist, is a circumstance not readily to be explained. It is, however, generally believed to have been indigenous in this country, as far as I can determine, from the few vague and unconnected remarks to be met with in different authors. Yet there are not wanting others, who assert the contrary, and consider it to have had its origin in South America—among those are Cieca, Commana, and Acosta, who wrote about the middle of the sixteenth century, and by whom we are told, that the inhabitants of Quito and its vicinity, have besides maize, a tuberous root, which they eat, and call papas. Clusius supposed this to be the convolvulus battata, which he received from Flanders in 1596, during his residence at Vienna, under the name of taratoufli, an appellation by which the Italians distinguish all tuberous roots—and this conjecture appears to be confirmed by travellers, who have since visited that country. If this had been the solanum tuberosum, how, as Clusius asks, could the knowledge of it have been so long in reaching us? and continues he, how could they have been ignorant of it at Padua, until I sent it from Frankfort.

"In his characters of the kings of England, Holt ascribes the introduction of this plant into Ireland, to Sir John Hawkins, who brought it from Santa Fe, as early as the year 1565. But little foundation existed for such an assertion, as appears from his own description. It is, doubtless, the convolvulus to which he alludes, as we have no account of the Virginia potatoe so early as that period. I state this upon the authority of Miller, as I have not been able to lay my hands upon the description alluded to—which may, however, be seen by reference to the Gentleman's Magazine, for the year 1789.—From the most authentic accounts, it would appear, that the potatoe now so extensively cultivated on the continent of Europe, was carried thither by Sir Walter Raleigh, on his return from Virginia, in the year 1586. There is some doubt, however, whether Sir Walter actually carried it, or that it was afterwards sent to him by Thomas Greenville, or Mr. Lane, the first governor of Virginia. Mr. Thomas Herriot, one of the colonists who went out with them, wrote an account of the root called openawk, which he describes in the following manner. The roots are round, some as large as a walnut, others much larger: they grow in a damp soil, many hanging together as if fixed on ropes, they are good food either boiled or roasted.

"It is plainly to be seen from this description, that the root under consideration, is the one to which he alludes, and that openawk is nothing more than the Indian name for the potatoe. The authority, however, for the fact does not rest with those writers. We are told by Gerarde, that he received roots from Virginia, in 1597, called norembega, which prospered as well in his garden, as in their own native country. He called them Virginia potatoes, to distinguish them from the convolvulus battata, which was at that time much better known, and called potatoes, from the Spanish name battata. He thus describes them. The root is thick, fat, and tuberous, not much differing in shape, colour, or taste, from the common potatoe, saving that the roots are not so great nor long; some of them round as a ball, some egg fashion, some longer, others shorter. It groweth naturally in America, where it was discovered.—Bauken also observes, that the potatoes came from Virginia into England, thence into France, and other countries.

"Writers are not sufficiently agreed, as to the time when the potatoe was introduced into Europe. It was certainly cultivated and used for food by the Irish, long before its utility was known in England. It is stated by Mr. Campbell to have been introduced into Ireland about the year 1610, and by Miller as late as the year 1623. Why they should have assigned so late a period to its introduction, is not easily accounted for, when we are informed by Gerarde, that he cultivated it in 1597. It is no easy matter to reconcile the statements of those different authors, much less to divest the subject of that obscurity, with which it seems to be enveloped. The most generally received opinion, and that which is substantiated by far the greater mass of evidence, ascribes its introduction to Sir Walter Raleigh on his return from Virginia, in 1586. Gouge in his edition of Camden's Britannia, states, that Raleigh planted the potatoe at his residence, Youghhall, in the county of Cork. An anecdote is also related of his gardener, which sheds much additional light upon the introduction of the potatoe into Ireland, that I hope I shall be excused the liberty of transcribing it. On his return he gave some of the potatoes to his gardener, as a fine fruit from America, and ordered them to be planted in his garden.—In August the plants flowered, and in September produced the fruit. But the berries were so different from what the gardener expected, that in an ill humour he carried the potatoe apples to his master, and is this, said he, the fine fruit from America you praised so highly! Sir Walter either was, or pretended to be ignorant of the matter, and desired the gardener, since that was the case, to dig up the weed and throw it away. The gardener, however, soon returned with a fine parcel of potatoes. I have thus been particular in introducing this anecdote, because it clearly shows that the potatoe could not have been generally known at that time. It will also be perceived by Sir Walter's instructions, the high importance in which he held it, as well as the attention he wished it to receive, by specifying the spot where it was to be planted.

"The potatoe from Ireland, gradually made its way into England, as some say, by the accidental shipwreck of a vessel on the coast of North Melos, in the county of Lancashire, a place even now famous for the production of this vegetable in the greatest perfection. Its cultivation was for some considerable time confined to this section of country. Nearly half a century elapsed before it received any attention in the vicinity of London—and it was considered even then, as a mere article of luxury, without any conception of the vast utility that would arise from bringing it into general use. Such indeed, was the little attention it received, that it lingered in obscurity until the year 1662, when the Royal Society considered it as an article of national importance, and recommended its general cultivation. The potatoe did not make its way into France as early as might have been expected, from the high recommendations it received in England.—Lister, in his journey to Paris, in 1698, informs us, that the potatoe at that time was scarcely to be found in the French markets. Its fortune there, appears to have been various, determined very much by the sudden revolutions which have particularly characterized that nation. Miller tells us, that it was not much cultivated till the year 1742—and in 1749, it fell into contempt—and its cultivation left wholly to the lower class of people. Its importance, however, soon began to revive, and claim a general notice, when, by a sudden fluctuation of opinion, it again lost its reputation. Yet it was not doomed to slumber long, for the necessities of the people had driven them to inventions, and they were willing to seize upon any thing that would be likely to resist the ingress of famine. The prejudices against its introduction still, however, continued, amidst this vacillation of opinion, until the production of bread made from the farina of the potatoe, in combination with wheaten flour. This, at least, gained for it a temporary reputation, and seemed to ensure it a durable existence, though there was still something wanting to fix its character as a wholesome article of food—which was reserved for Parmentier, who, in 1778, brought forth a specimen of bread from the farina of the potatoe alone.—In Germany its fortune was not so precarious. It appears readily to have paved its way, and to have been cultivated as early as the year 1601—since, Clusius says, *ea plerisque Germaniæ hortis satis vulgario dudum facta*. In Italy its fate was nearly allied to the experiment in France: so great, indeed, were the prejudices which it had to encounter, that, we are told, a ship load of the roots having been sent from England to Naples, to relieve the inhabitants of that place, who were then the victims of famine and disease, that the mere name of potatoe, as food, carried with it such dread, that they chose rather to bear the horrors of their situation, than purchase the article. But happily for that portion of country, those prejudices gave way to the magic wand of science; and the potatoe now supplies the food of those wretched vagrants, who were before doomed to subsist on the watery gourd.

"In Scotland, Sweden, and Burgundy, it had to contend alike with the obstacles which had so long opposed it. But it is gratifying to learn, that the potatoe is ultimately finding its way into the remo-

test corners of the earth, and is now nearly every where cultivated for the benefit of mankind.

Esculent Properties.

"The reputation of the potatoe, as an esculent, wholesome vegetable, is too well established, as has been already intimated, to require any farther attention from me. Its use for food appears to have co-existed with its discovery: we can find at least, in its early history, no trace of its application to any other purpose. Especial objections, however, were formed against it, on account of its place among the solana. In Burgundy, we are told, its culture was interdicted, in consequence of its supposed mischievous properties. Among the fancied effects produced by it, were leprosy and dysentery.—Those prejudices, no doubt, originated from its exposure to the sun and weather, by which its natural qualities were destroyed; as the means of preserving it were, at that time, very little understood. Many accounts of its injurious effects are to be met with; but such representations do not prove the unwholesomeness of the root, since it has constituted the chief article of food to vast numbers of people for upwards of a century. The dependence of England and Ireland upon it for food, is such, indeed, that it is emphatically stiled the *bread root* of those countries.—Nor is it much less extensively raised in the highlands of Scotland, where scarcity or famine was too frequent an occurrence before its introduction. It is said, that many of the inhabitants of Banff, a small district in that country, in the year 1783, must have fallen victims to famine, had not the potatoe been supplied. In Wales, its cultivation has become general, as we are told, that potatoes and barley bread form the chief sustenance of the poor—and what at this time occasions the calamitous situation of Ireland, save the failure of this important crop! Two millions of people are by this circumstance deprived of the very sustenance of life, and destined to drag out an existence, at best intolerable. Even in the early history of this vegetable, we find the attachment of the Irish to it strongly marked, and the fancy of the poet inspired to celebrate its praises:

"Leek to the Welsh,—to Dutchmen butter's dear,
Of Irish swains potatoe is the cheer."

"The success which now attends the rearing of this vegetable could not have been anticipated, even by the most sanguine, from the many formidable obstacles over which it had to triumph.

"Having its origin in a warm climate, it was supposed to be intolerant of cold, and upon that account, incapable of cultivation in more northern climes. But experience has shown the contrary, and the potatoe is naturalized almost in every region. With the lower classes of people, it is one of the greatest blessings that the soil produces, forming flour without a mill, and bread without an oven, and at all seasons of the year, an agreeable, wholesome dish, unaided by expensive or injurious condiments. What resources does the potatoe present to us! Its stalk, considered as a texile plant, furnishes in Austria a sort of flax—when burned it yields much potash—its apples when ripe and crushed, ferment and give spirits by distillation—its tubercles made into a pulp, are a substitute for soap, in bleaching. Cooked by steam, the potatoe is most healthy food. By different manipulations it furnishes two kinds of flour—a gruel and a parenchyma, which may be applied to increase the bulk of bread made from grain. Treated chemically, it is converted into beer, vinegar, spirits, &c.

"It will be perceived, that the potatoe is susceptible of a very and diversified application, and highly deserving the attention of the agriculturist. Numerous experiments have already been commenced, and considerably extended on the farina of this vegetable, and by which it appears to be equal in nutritious properties to that of any other article.—From some comparative experiments by Mr. Whately, of Cork, it is plainly shown, that the same quantity of land cultivated in potatoes, will produce one half more farina, than the same land applied to the production of farina from wheat. He also appropriated the farina of this root to the making of bread, biscuit, and pastry, with different proportions of flour, and found that they resisted better the effect of climate, than when made wholly of wheaten flour. It seems, indeed, to have a remarkable power of preservation, as Mr. Whately states, he has known the flour to keep good seventeen years. The farina possessing all the nutritious parts of the potatoe, and being perfectly bland and digestible in its nature, may be supposed to form an excellent article of diet for the sick. In the shops of Europe, a composition, vended under the title of semolina, and recommended as a nutritious diet for children and sick persons, is said to be essentially, the farina of potatoes.

"It is obvious, from what has been stated above, that the potatoe does not hold its reputation, exclusively, as an article af diet. The potash in such quantities has been obtained from the combustion of its leaves, that it is supposed from the facility with which the process is effected, that France will be released in a great degree from the heavy sum she pays this country, in the purchase of that article.—It also appears by the experiments of Dr. Anderson, that ardent spirits in considerable quantity may be obtained from the distillation of the potatoe. From seventy pounds of the bruised roots, he obtained one gallon of pure spirits, considerably above proof, and about a quart below proof. The potatoe has also been made the subject of analysis, by several distinguished chemists, among whom is Vanquelin, who, from a careful investigation, drew as a conclusion, that the potatoe was composed of starch, of parenchyma, of a peculiar animal matter, and of certain salts. The existence of these principles does not explain the cause of the spirituous fermentation which they undergo, when exposed in the ordinary manner to requisite temperature. It became then a desideratum to discover the substance which, in the potatoe, supplies the place of saccharine matter, to which alone this peculiar process is conceived to be owing. By a well regulated set of experiments, made by Dr. Reshier, it is shown to contain sugar and gum, in the proportion of sixty-four grains of mucous sugar, to two hundred and twenty grains of gum in the pound. It also appears from the experiments of Vanquelin, that resin and animalized matter are the only sapid ingredients of the potatoe, and give it the superior flavour, perceived when the article is eaten roasted, and which is necessarily lost by boiling.

"*Case of Neuralgia cured by Acupuncturation.*—*Communicated by* J. HUNTER EWING, M. D.

"THE attention of the Medical public having been of late much excited on the subject of acupuncturation, I am induced to communicate the following case.

"For eighteen months, Miss——had been afflicted, at intervals, with a severely painful affection of the nerves of the right cheek, immediately below the orbit of the eye, and extending to the angle of the lower jaw. On the 14th of January, 1826, she was attacked more violently than usual, and the remedies, which had previously afforded some relief, now failed. Stimulating cataplasms, warm embrocations, laudanum, internally and externally, heat applied externally to the cheek by means of very hot flannels, produced not the slightest mitigation of the pain; and she continued to suffer excessively until the afternoon of the 15th; when acupuncturation being proposed, she consented to the operation with this remark,—any thing to relieve me from this agony.

"The needles were immediately procured, and three inserted about an inch from each other. Two in a line parallel with the inferior edge of the orbit of the eye, and half an inch below it; and a third below, and equi-distant from the others. The first two were introduced to the depth of three-fourths of an inch, the last, a full inch. They were inserted very gradually and with a rotary motion.

"The second needle was scarcely introduced, before the patient exclaimed, the pain has entirely left me. When the third was introduced, she experienced a stiffness in the muscles of the cheek, and a creeping sensation, as if a spider's web had been drawn across the face; but no painful sensation whatever.

"Such was the exhausted state of her system, from the excessive pain she had suffered, that when thus relieved, she requested a pillow to rest her head on, and fell into a gentle slumber.

"About two hours after the insertion of the needles, I again visited my patient, and found her still perfectly free from pain, and seated at a table reading. She thanked me for the relief I had been the means of affording her, and requested me not to withdraw the needles, lest the pain might return. Upon being apprised of the risk that might attend their being allowed to remain, she observed, that she would rather have a servant to watch her whilst she slept. The propriety of their removal being further urged, she at last consented. There was no return of pain.

"The next morning, the patient remarked, that the stiffness of the cheek, and a numbness of the whole right side, continued through the night; and though she did not sleep very soundly, she was free from pain and rested well.

By the third day, the stiffness and numbness had passed away, and there was no return of pain. Several weeks have now passed, and she has had no relapse; although often since exposed to causes, which, heretofore, had always excited violent attacks.—Previous to the operation, she seldom passed as many days without severe suffering.

"Although I have performed this operation many times, and been present when others have performed it, I have never seen a case, in which its efficacy was so decided, or in which the relief afforded was more unquestionably attributable to the action of the needles.—*N. Amer. Med. & Sur. Jour.*

"*Tartar Emetic in Pneumonia.* Mr. Wood determined to try the new method of treating pneumonia with large doses of antimony, in consequence of reading an account of the practice in our cotemporary of the North. A patient soon presented himself, with sympto[illegible] of pulmonic inflammation. He was a stout man, 34 years of age. Mr. W. took away 30 ounces of blood, and ordered a mixture containig ℈iij. antim. tartarisat. ʒiss. tinct. camp. comp. and ʒij. of water. Half of this was directed to be taken immediately, and the remainder in two hours.

"*Second day.* Mr. W. found his patient sitting by the fire side. He had spent a restless night. He had taken the medicine as directed. The first dose (30 grains) caused nausea, but no vomiting. The second dose does not appear to have produced any particular effect—at least none on record. The pulse was lowered from 104 to 98. The other usual symptoms of pneumonia continued. He was ordered to bed, and a purgative of calomel and jalap prescribed. In the evening the symptoms were rather increased. A mixture was directed, containing four grains of the tartrite of antimony, one drachm of laudanum, and four ounces of water—a fourth part every three hours.

"*Third day.* Perspired much in the night—no nausea—the symptoms ameliorated. The antimonial solution repeated, with the addition of two grains of tartar emetic.

"The case is too tedious for detail: we shall, therefore, content ourselves with saying, that the patient was obliged to be thrice bled from the arm, and once by leeches—that a copious perspiration was produced by the large doses of antimony, but no vomiting—that, when the medicine was reduced to comparatively small doses, constant nausea, and at last vomiting was produced—that the disease was much longer under treatment than is usual in acute pneumonia—that the medicine proved powerfully *diuretic* as well as diaphoretic—and, finally, that the case does not hold out much temptation to imitate the practice, though it proves, as far as one case goes, that large doses of tartar emetic are not productive of so much sickness of stomach as small ones.—*Ed. Jour. July*, 1825.

CINCINNATI;
WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 16, 1826.

The highest degree of heat, from the first to the fourteenth of this month, was on the 13th, at 2 P. M. when the mercury stood at 91. The lowest fall was on the 9th, at 6 P.M. when it fell to 55. The mean temperature for the above time was 75 1-2. The range 36.

MEDICAL BOTANY.

A description of the WESTERN MEDICAL PLANTS, *including some notice of their Medical virtues; to be selected and described at, or near, the time of their flowering, and continued through the season of Botanical investigation;*

By J. LOCKE, M. D.

Author of the Outlines of Botany, And Principal of the Cincinnati Female Academy.

Lobelia inflata. *Indian tobacco.*

Root fibrous; stem erect, divided into spreading branches; from six inches to two feet high, hairy. Leaves ovate, toothed, hairy upon the veins underneath; lower ones on foot-stalks, upper ones close to the stem, (sessile) with a prominent line running from each edge of the leaf down the edge. Flowers in racemes, at the ends of the branches; calyx of five awl-shaped leaves; corolla, pale blue, having a tube nearly as long as the calyx, slitted on the upper side nearly to the base; divided at the border into five unequal segments, two of which are narrow and erect, the other three shorter and broader, forming a lower lip to the flower.

The capsules are bladder-like, (inflated;) ovate, about half an inch long; many seeded; crowned with the five awl-shaped leaves of the calyx; when pressed between the fingers they burst with a snapping noise, in consequence of the air they contain. The leaves, when torn, yield a milky juice from the broken ends of the veins. The lower seed-vessels are often full grown, while the upper flowers are still blooming. Blooms in July and August. Found in the pastures west of this city, and also in Covington.

Class V. Pentandria. Order I. Monogynia.

Natural order. Campalunaceæ.

CHARACTER OF THE GENUS. Flowers monopetalous, superior; corolla irregular, cloven; anthers united; stigma capitate; capsules 2 or 3-celled.

CHARACTER OF THE SPECIES. Inflata. Stem erect; leaves ovate; slightly serrate; longer than the peduncles; capsules inflated.

MEDICAL USES. "The leaves chewed are at first insipid, says Dr. Cutler, but soon become pungent, occasioning a copious discharge of saliva. If they are held in the mouth for some time they produce giddiness and pain in the head, with a trembling agitation of the whole body; at length they bring on extreme nausea and vomiting. The taste resembles that of tartar emetic. A plant possessed of such active properties, notwithstanding the violent effects from chewing the leaves, may possibly become a valuable medicine.

"It was employed by the aborigines as an emetic, and also by those empirics who affect to deal in Indian remedies only. As a new article it has lately excited much speculation in the New-England States, and its properties have very frequently been subjected to the test of practical experiment. It is found to operate as a speedy and active emetic; and it often induces a most profuse perspiration immediately after being received into the stomach. It has proved serviceable in cases of colic, where emetics were indicated. In a variety of instances it has been administered as a remedy in asthmatic affections, and on competent authority we are assured, that it has in general manifested considerable efficacy, and sometimes proved more beneficial in this distressing disease than any other medicine. From some of its effects, says an eminent physician lobelia seems to be related to the narcotic plants; to the mouth and first passages it proves acrid and highly stimulant; its stimulus appears to be of the diffusive kind, as Dr. Cutler, on taking it, experienced an irritation of the skin over the whole body. It is probably one of the most powerful vegetable substances with which we are acquainted, and no rational practitioner will have recourse to it, but with the greatest precaution. The melancholy consequences resulting from the use of *lobelia inflata*, as lately administered by the adventurous hands of a noted empiric, have justly excited considerable interest, and furnished alarming examples of its deleterious properties and fatal effects. The dose in which he is said usually to prescribe it, and frequently with impunity, is a common tea-spoonful of the powdered seeds or leaves, and often repeated. If the medicine does not puke or evacuate powerfully, it frequently destroys the patient, and sometimes in five or six hours.

"Even horses and cattle have been supposed to be killed by eating it accidentally. The specific qualities of this highly active plant, promising to be of utility as a remedy, should be particularly investigated by ingenious and intelligent men; that its rank in the Materia Medica may be clearly ascertained.

DOSES. "The following highly interesting obser vations are from the Rev. Dr. M. Cutler.

"When I was preparing my botanical paper, says the Doctor, I had given it (the lobelia) only a cursory examination, and having some doubt about its specific characters, I suspected it to be a new species. Accidentally ascertaining its emetic property, I inserted it with the specific name, *emetic weed.*— By chewing a small part of it, commonly no more than one or two of the capsules, it proves a gentle emetic. If the quantity be a little increased, it operates as an emetic, and then as a cathartic, its effects being much the same as those of the common emetics and cathartics. It has been my misfortune, the author observes, to be an asthmatic for about ten years. I have made trial of a great variety of the usual remedies with very little benefit. In several paroxysms I had found immediate relief more frequently than from any thing else, from the skunk-cabbage. The last summer I had the severest attack I ever experienced. It commenced early in August, and continued about eight weeks. Dr. Drury, of Marblehead, also an asthmatic, had made use of a tincture of the Indian tobacco, by the advise of a friend, in a severe paroxysm early in the spring.— It gave him immediate relief, and he has been entirely free from the complaint from that time. I had a tincture made of the fresh plant, and took care to have the spirit fully saturated, which, I think, is important. In a paroxysm, which, perhaps, was as severe as I ever experienced, the difficulty of breathing extreme, and after it had continued for a considerable time, I took a table-spoonful. In three or four minutes my breathing was as free as it ever was, but I felt no nausea at the stomach. In ten minutes I took another spoonful, which occasioned sickness. After ten minutes I took the third, which produced sensible effects upon the coats of the stomach, and a very little moderate puking, and a kind of prickly sensation through the whole system, even to the extremities of the fingers and toes. The urinary passage was perceptibly affected by producing a smarting sensation in passing urine, which was probably provoked by the stimulus upon the bladder. But all these sensations very soon subsided, and a vigour seemed to be restored to the constitution, which I had not experienced for years. I have not since had a paroxysm, and only a few times some small symptoms of asthma. Besides the violent attacks, I had scarcely passed a night without more or less of it, and often so as not to be able to lie in bed. Since that time I have enjoyed as good health as, perhaps, before the first attack.

"I have given the minute detail of my own case, from an apprehension that this plant, judiciously employed, may approach nearer to a specific in this most distressing complaint, than any other that has been yet discovered. But I am aware much further experiment is necessary to ascertain its real value. Several medical gentlemen have since made use of the tincture in asthmatic cases with much success, but the effects have not been uniformly the same.— In all instances of which I have had information, it has produced immediate relief, but the effects have been different in different kinds of asthma. Some patients have been severely puked with only a tea-spoonful, but in all cases some nausea seems to be necessary. The asthma with which I have been afflicted, I conceive to be that kind which Dr. Bree, in his *Practical Inquiries on disordered Respiration*, &c. calls the first species—a convulsive asthma from pulmonic irritation of effused serum. My constitution has been free, I believe, from any other disorder, than what has been occasioned by an affection of the lungs, anxiety of the præcordia, and straitness of the breast, and other symptoms produced by that affection.

"The result of subsequent practical observation has amply confirmed the utility of lobelia inflata in various diseases. In numerous instances of asthma it has procured the most essential relief, though in general its effects were only temporary and palliative. As a pectoral it has been found useful in consumptive and other coughs depending on mucous accumulations in the bronchial vessels, by exciting nausea and expectoration. From its very speedy operation as an emetic, and its stimulating effects on the mouth and fauces, beneficial results might be expected from its use in croup and whooping-cough: and in some trials our expectations have been realized in this respect. It may perhaps be anticipated to supersede seneka as a remedy in the former, and antimonials in the latter affection. More extensive practical knowledge of the properties of this plant, and the various forms and circumstances of its administration, is still, however, a most desirable object.

"The leaves should be collected in August, while the plant is in blossom, and carefully dried and preserved for use. From ten to twenty grains of the powdered leaves will, in general, be found a suitable dose, as an emetic, for an adult, or it may be repeated in smaller quantities. As a pectoral, it may be given in powder or pills alone, or combined with other remedies, repeated in small doses, till an evident good result is observable. Of the saturated tincture, twenty, forty, or even sixty drops may be safely given to children of one or two years old, increasing it as occasion may require." *Coxe's Am. Disp.*

THE MORAL AND PHYSICAL INFLUENCE OF THE MORNING AND EVENING AIR ON MAN.

(*Continued.*)

The appearance of persons who have long been exposed to an impure atmosphere; whether in confined apartments or in malarious districts, is a livid shining skin; tumified abdomen; furred tongue; lassitude, manifested in a lounging listless walk; irritability; irregular and defective appetite; with an alternating, constipated, and lax state of the bowels.

The preventives to the effects of a confined heated air, are, well ventilated chambers, situated as high from the level of the greatest proportion of the surrounding country as possible. The second or third story should always be preferred for a bed chamber; with the windows opposite, and always lowered in warm dry weather: it is better that the air should be let into a room, through the top of the window; this may be done at all times, if the heat of the weather requires it. If the atmosphere is damp, let a cloth curtain down, which will deprive the atmosphere of its humidity whilst passing through it. Very little exercise should be used during the warmest part of the day; the dress should be light and loose; acidulated drinks, with moderately nutritious diet. What exercise is used should be taken between the hours of seven and eleven in the morning, and from four to seven in the evening.

The preventives to the influence of *malaria*, may be considered in relation to those agents which limits its sphere of action and motion: and those which controul the susceptibilities of the system to

its influence. The approach of malaria may be arrested, by surrounding a dwelling with a thick row, or many rows, of forest trees; by a high wall, or closely boarded fence; by causing the air that passes into the room, to pass through baize, or any other equally heavy cloth; by keeping up a fire during the evening, especially when the atmosphere is warm and humid. An individual may protect himself from its influence, when walking in the evening, by tying his pocket handkerchief around his mouth and nose; by breathing in this way, the air is filtered when passing through the many folds of the handkerchief, which filtration will arrest any deleterious principles that may be floating in it.

In the second place, good health is the best preventive to disease; but when the health is impaired, then we may resort to remedies. Much may be done to insure a continuance of health; and nothing, perhaps, is of more importance, than simplicity and regularity in all things. Habit is a second nature, and a person, whose situation exposes him to disease, should be governed by a code of rules which should never be violated; there should be a time for retiring to bed, and a time for rising—a time for breakfast, a time for dinner, a time for supper, as well as a time for exercise. If a man accustoms himself to go to bed every night at ten, and to rise at six, the system will eventually adapt itself to that arrangement; and no deviation from that custom will be admitted with impunity.

If we accustom ourselves to dine at one, the stomach, at that time, is prepared for the reception of our dinner; but if we should defer that meal for one or two hours, such delay will disturb the regular functions of digestion, and a disordered state of the stomach, liver, and bowels, will be the consequence. So in relation to the use of spirits; if we must use it we should resort to it at certain hours of the day, taking a given quantity, of one kind and quality. As to medicine, it should never be resorted to, unless it is actually required. In sickly seasons, the bowels should never be allowed to remain costive more than twenty-four hours; an acid stomach should be corrected, and debility should be avoided; large bleedings, as a prophylactic, are improper in warm sickly seasons; accumulations of bile in the stomach and bowels should be obviated by suitable medicines; and the diet must be simple and nutritious; the quantity suited to the constitution, habits, and amount of physical exercise, peculiar to the individual.

To be continued.

"*Analysis of Rhubarb.*—It is some time since Mr. NANI, an Italian chemist, announced the discovery of a crystallizable vegetable alkali in rhubarb. Mr. CAVENTOU has repeated the experiments of Mr. N. and finds them, in many respects, inaccurate. Upon analysing the alcoholic extract of rhubarb, by the aid of alcohol and ether, employed seperately and combined, Mr. C. obtained a fatty matter, containing a little odoriferous volatile oil; and a yellow colouring principle, capable of crystallization, and of being sublimed without decomposition, which may be called *rhubarbin*. He also detected in the alcoholic extract, a brown substance, insoluble in water when pure, but rendered soluble by combination with rhubarbin; when it forms a compound, constituting the *caphopicrite* of some chemists, and the *rhubarbin* of Psaff.—*Arch. Gen.*

Mr. GEORGE W. CARPENTER, of this city, prepares the medicinal principle of rhubarb in combination with sulphuric acid, under the name of sulphate of rhubarb, by the following process:

"Boil, for half an hour, six pounds of coarsly powdered Chinese rhubarb in six gallons of water, acidulated with two and a half fluid ounces of sulphuric acid; strain the decoction, and submit the residue to a second ebullition in a like quantity of acidulated water; strain as before, and submit it again to a third ebullition. Unite the three decoctions, and add, by small portions, recently powdered pure lime, constantly stirring it to facilitate its action on the acid decoction. When the decoction becomes slightly alkaline, it deposits a red flocculent precipitate, and the fluid is changed from a yellow to a crimson colour. The precipitate is then to be seperated by passing it through a linen cloth, and dried; after which, reduce it to powder, and digest in three gallons of alcohol, at thirty-six degrees, in a water bath, for several hours, at a moderate heat. Seperate this solution from the alcohol. There then remains a strong solution of rhubarbin, to which add as much sulphuric acid as will exactly neutralize it.—Evaporate this slowly to dryness, without having access to atmospheric air. The residuum will be of a brownish-red colour, intermingled with brilliant specks possessing a slightly pungent styptic taste, soluble in water, and its odour that of the native rhubarb. This residuum is the sulphate of rhubarb.—(Sulphate of *rhubarbin*.)

"MR. CARPENTER assures us, that this preparation contains the medical principle of the rhubarb, apart from its inert portion; and considers it as bearing the same relation to rhubarb, as the sulphate quinia to the Peruvian bark. The Chinese rhubarb, at half the price, furnished twice as much rhubarbin as the reputed Russian, which Mr. C. considers to be spurious in the Philadelphia market, being the English in imitation of the Russian.—*Phil. Jour. of Med. & Phys. Scien. May.* Ibid.

"*Remedies for Itch.* For the benefit of all those whom it may concern, on either side of the Tweed—or even in our good town of Berwick, we publish the following important information respecting the best, quickest, and *cheapest* modes of curing the itch. Dr. Maury has made a series of experiments to this effect, in the St. Louis Hospital—and twenty-one formulæ are given, with their results. We subjoin four of the most efficacious.

"Camphorated liniment of M. Valdy; composed of two ounces of olive or almond oil, and two drachms of camphor. Mean duration of the treatment, 13 3-16 days. This medicine is too expensive for habitual use at an hospital: it stains the linen; the smell is not unpleasant; it effects the cure without irritating the skin, and the itching is much relieved by the first application. It is recommended as a good remedy for private practice. The compound liniment of M. Fournier differs from the preceding, only in the addition of two drachms of liquid ammonia, and the combination is favourably spoken of. The medium length of time required for the cure being reduced to 11 4-16 days.

"Sulphur pomatum of M. Helmerick: sublimed sulphur, two parts; purified potass, one part; lard, eight parts. Two frictions are made in the day, using two ounces of the pomatum for each. Mean duration of the treatment, 11 7-16 days. The price of this is moderate; it soils the linen from the excess of fat over the alkali; has some smell, but does not incommode the skin, and effects a speedy cure.—It differs little from the pommade sulphuro-alcaline, employed at the hospital of St. Louis.

"Pomatum proposed by M. Melier: subcarbonate of soda, two ounces; water, one ounce; olive oil, four ounces; flower of sulphur, four ounces. Dissolve the subcarbonate in the water, and add the oil, so as to make a soap; then add the sulphur by little and little, carefully mixing it. Of this two ounces are to be used for each friction, and those to be employed twice a-day. Mean period required for the cure, 13 7-10 days. This method presents the advantage of an oil and alkali united in such proportions as to form a soap, by which means it is prevented from staining the linen, and cures the eruption without irritating the skin. It is not without smell. It is suggested that camphor might be substituted for the sulphur, in the proportion of four drachms to the quantity above mentioned

"Sulphureous baths. To a common bath add four ounces of the sulphuret of potass. Mean time required for the cure, 17 3-10 days. This method is very gentle, effecting the cure without inconvenience, but slowly, and not suiting every patient. The bath may be rendered more active, and the cure more speedy, by adding a little sulphuric acid. It is expensive, however, and can scarcely be employed but on a great scale.

"From the foregoing it would appear that the itch is rather more obstinate on the Continent than in this country, where, certainly, the cure, in general, is not so tedious as in the above report. It appears, after all, that *there is nothing like sulphur.*—*Med.-Chir. Rev.*

"*Sulphate of Quinia, extracted from the Cinchonia Bark, exhausted by Decoction.*—Mr. JULIA-FONTENELLE, from the sparing solubility of quinia and cinchonia, suspected that decoctions and aqueous extracts of Peruvian bark contained but little of those vegetable alkalies; whence it would follow, that the residuum, generally rejected as having no febrifuge power, would still contain the greater part of them. This suspicion has been in a great measure verified. The aqueous extract was found to contain but little cinchonia and quinia; while the residuum of decoctions, giving the mean results, furnished two-thirds of the sulphate of quinia, yielded by the same weight of cinchonia not acted on by water.

"As decoctions and aqueous extracts of bark are febrifuge, though containing inconsiderable quantities of quinia, and cinchonia, Mr. JULIA-FONTENELLE is led to believe, that these salifiable bases arenot the only febrifuge principles in Peruvian bark, but that the extractive matter also possesses that property.

"His results present a striking difference between alchoholic and aqueous extracts of bark; for while the former contain nearly the whole of the salifiable principles, the latter contains very little.—*Revue Medicale.* Ibid.

TRANSYLVANIA UNIVERSITY.

Medical Department.

THE LECTURES will commence, as usual, on the first Monday of November, and terminate in the first week of the ensuing March.

Anatomy and Surgery, by DR. DUDLEY.
Institutes of Medicine and Clinical Practice, by DR. CALDWELL.
Theory and Practice of Medicine, by DR. DRAKE.
Obstetricks and the Diseases of Women and Children, by DR. RICHARDSON.
Materia Medica and Medical Botany, by DR SHORT.
Chemistry, by DR. BLYTHE.

The paper of the Bank of the Commonwealth of Kentucky, heretofore received at par, by the Professors, having nearly gone out of circulation; specie, or its equivalent will hereafter be expected.—The price of each ticket is fifteen dollars, with the exception of that to the course of Anatomy and Surgery, which is twenty. The Matriculation, with admission to the Library and Reading Room, which are kept open every day, is five dollars,—making the aggregate fees for instruction $100.

The Library, containing about 3000 volumes, is constantly augmenting, by the importation of new standard and periodical works, from Great Britain and the continent of Europe.

The difficulties experienced by the two last Classes, from the disproportionate size of the *Anatomical Hall*, have been obviated by the erection of a new one, of enlarged dimensions, with appurtenances and conveniences not surpassed by any other in the United States.

By order of the Faculty,
DAN. DRAKE, M. D.
Dean of the Medical Faculty.

Transylvania University, July 15, 1826.

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